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SENSITIVE  
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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [YM](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE REQUEST ON UN ENGAGEMENT IN YEMEN

REF: A. SANAA 1690  
[1](#)B. SANAA 1532

THIS MESSAGE IS SENSITIVE, BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE TREAT ACCORDINGLY.

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. UN Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes intends to travel to Yemen on/about October 8 to observe UN agency responses to the Houthi conflict in the northern Sa'ada province of Yemen. The Department requests that USUN approach Mr. Holmes in advance of his visit to relay the importance the U.S. Government places on UN agency activities in Yemen and our expectation that he will be vocal and forthright with his assessment of the situation. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Background: There may be as many as 150,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), of whom approximately 95,000 were displaced before the latest round of fighting, in northern Yemen. The number of IDPs may continue to grow. Access to IDPs is very limited by the fighting and the Yemeni government itself has been unable to keep open lines of communication to Sa'ada. The Yemeni and Saudi governments have reportedly agreed to allow UNHCR to deliver aid and supplies from Saudi Arabia to IDPs located on the Yemeni side of the border. The Department is supportive of these efforts and has lobbied both sides on the UN's behalf. We continue to call for a ceasefire to the conflict to allow for the delivery of humanitarian supplies and for both sides to respect their international obligations to protect civilians and relief workers.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Background continued: There is limited press reporting due to the insecurity in the conflict zone, and the U.S. government is concerned that the Yemeni government will take the limited attention as license to continue its war efforts without respect for protecting the civilian and IDP population.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Begin Talking Points:

-- The U.S. government is deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation in northern Yemen. The ferocity of the conflict and remoteness of the region endangers the civilian population and complicates access for humanitarian assistance. The lack of information means it is difficult to ascertain the conditions of vulnerable populations.

-- Your visit provides the first opportunity since the sixth round of fighting began August 12 to highlight the UN's concerns about the Sa'ada war and bring its worrisome humanitarian dimensions and destabilizing potential to the attention of the international community.

-- We are eager to see the UN take greater efforts to make public the humanitarian impact of the conflict and to push the Yemeni government and Houthi rebels to create the conditions for safe passage of humanitarian goods and workers to enter into the conflict zone.

-- Should you assess the situation to be critical, a public statement of concern from the UN regarding the growing humanitarian crisis and a call for both parties to cease hostilities and return to the principles of the Doha Agreement as a basis for bringing the conflict to an end would help us pressure the Yemeni government to seek a lasting ceasefire and to address some regional grievances through dialogue.

-- Should you be interested, our Embassy in Sana'a is available to brief you on our assessment of the situation in greater detail.

-- We would also appreciate your frank assessment of the situation upon your return.

End Text.

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Reporting Requirement  
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15. (SBU) USUN is requested to report the results of its efforts no later than October 7, 2009. Please slug all responses for NEA/ARP (Andrew MacDonald, NEA/ARP, 202-647-6558, MacDonaldAT@State.gov) and PRM/ANE (Rebecca Schaeffer, PRM/ANE, 202-663-1043, SchaefferRR@State.gov).  
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